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Food Security Situation and Issues:
A North American Perspective



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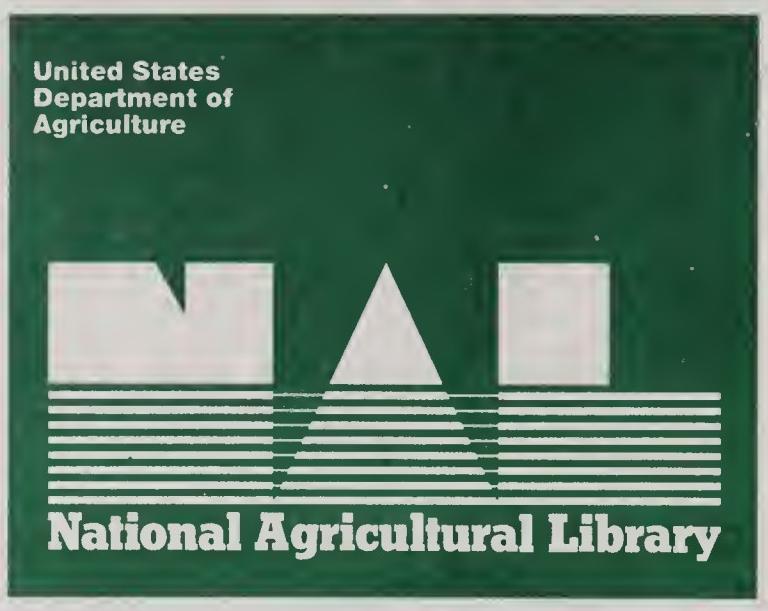
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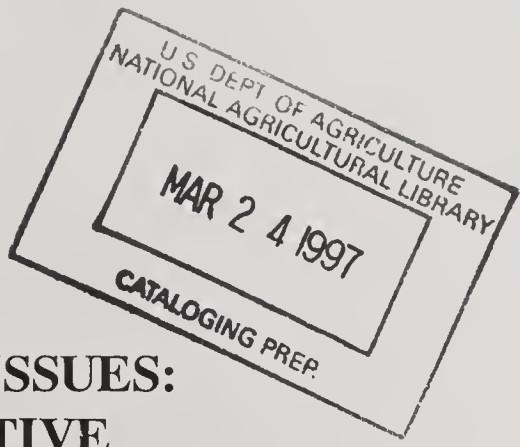
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WORLD FOOD SUMMIT

FOOD SECURITY SITUATION AND ISSUES: A NORTH AMERICAN¹ PERSPECTIVE



CONTENTS

	Page
INTRODUCTION	1
I. WORLD FOOD SECURITY TRENDS	2
II. FOOD SECURITY TRENDS, PROSPECTS, AND ISSUES IN THE NORTH AMERICAN REGION	5
1. Overall Food Security Situation and Prospects	5
2. Regional Food Security Trends, Issues, and Outlook	6
Policy Framework	6
Research, Technology, and Dissemination	8
Public and Private Sector Responsibility	9
Safety Nets and Vulnerable Groups	11
Trade and Development Cooperation	13
3. Regional Implications for Food Security	15
III. ACTIONS TO ADDRESS GLOBAL FOOD SECURITY	16
1. Creating an Enabling Economic, Political, Legal, and Social Environment	17
Basis for Action	17
Objectives	19
Actions to be Taken	20
2. Enhancing Sustainable Food System Capacity	21
Basis for Action	21
Objectives	22
Actions to be Taken	22

¹ In conformity with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations regional configuration, the term "North America" in this paper is used to denote the United States and Canada.

3.	Implementing Freer International Trade	24
	Basis for Action	24
	Objectives	26
	Actions to be Taken	26
4.	Improving Access to Food for Food-Insecure Groups, Including on an Emergency Basis	27
	Basis for Action	27
	Objectives	27
	Actions to be Taken	28
5.	Mobilizing More Effective International Efforts to Supplement and Reinforce National Commitments, Including on an Emergency Basis	29
	Basis for Action	29
	Objectives	30
	Actions to be Taken	30
6.	Monitoring and Follow-up	32
	Basis for Action	32
	Objectives	32
	Actions to be Taken	33

INTRODUCTION

1. Fifty years ago, countries mobilized to fight hunger and malnutrition with the establishment of the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations (UN). Some five decades later, the world can proudly point to a number of battles won, particularly in terms of economic development and dramatic increases in agricultural production. Despite this, it is totally unacceptable that a staggering number of people -- nearly 800 million -- still go to bed hungry or malnourished each night. Inappropriate national policies; poverty; inadequate production capacity; war and civil strife; natural disasters; gender inequality; environmental degradation; and trade barriers all play a role in undermining universal food security. Moreover, despite some success in reducing world population growth, the fact remains that the world's population is growing at an alarming rate and much of this growth is in food-deficit countries where poverty is the greatest.
2. Global food security clearly remains a necessary and worthy goal. No parent should ever have to fear the loss of a child to malnutrition; no child should ever see a parent succumb to starvation. Food security is simply too basic, too fundamental to individual human dignity and survival.
3. The FAO-sponsored World Food Summit in November 1996 offers a timely occasion for all countries to reinforce their commitment to the achievement of global food security. The United States and Canada are prepared to support the efforts of those developing countries that are putting in place the necessary political, economic, legal, and social frameworks needed to improve food security. In this era of ever-tighter constraints on donor country budgets for food aid and other types of assistance, building local capacity to produce, import, store, and distribute safe and nutrient-rich food in an environmentally sustainable manner will also play an ever-greater role in achieving food security. Building this capacity will require significant political will on the part of governments in developed and developing countries alike, as well as investments both of time and capital from all sectors of society. Sustainable management of agricultural, fishery, and forest resources will also be critical to this effort.
4. A primary obstacle to food security is poverty. In this regard, the United States and Canada support the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) Ministerial target of reducing by 50 percent by 2015 the number of people living in extreme poverty. Moreover, acute food insecurity, which affects millions of people, results largely from war and internal conflicts. There is a critical need to reinforce efforts at conflict prevention and resolution.
5. Canada and the United States therefore urge all members of the international community to seek to overcome problems of chronic hunger and malnutrition around the world through new partnerships that unite the world in pursuit of the common, but elusive, goal of achieving food for all, and in partnerships that bring together governments, the private sector, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), other elements of civil society, and international

organizations to foster efficiency, synergies, and new productive collaborations as we reach for that goal.

6. The FAO Committee on World Food Security expressed its wish to benefit from the perspectives of the regions on the major issues, policies, and actions for attaining regional and global food security, as a contribution to the World Food Summit draft Policy Declaration and Plan of Action. The purpose of this paper is to stimulate discussions on food security and to provide a substantive contribution to the World Food Summit Global Plan of Action.

I. WORLD FOOD SECURITY TRENDS

7. Generally, over the past three decades, world food production, although down slightly from its peak in 1990, has grown faster than population. Per capita food production is today about 18 percent above that of 30 years ago. However, food is very unevenly distributed among and within countries. Per capita consumption in Western Europe and North America averages more than 50 percent higher than in sub-Saharan Africa. One-third of the population of sub-Saharan Africa is chronically undernourished.

8. Despite the considerable progress achieved in increasing per capita food supplies, more than 800 million people in the developing countries are chronically undernourished. Millions more suffer debilitating diseases related to micronutrient deficiencies and to contaminated food and water. Every day, one out of five people in the developing world cannot get enough food to meet their daily needs; in 17 African countries, between two and three out of five people do not have adequate food. The regions of Western Europe, North America, Near East, and Latin America and the Caribbean have the lowest percentage of undernourished. The largest numbers, though declining, are to be found in Asia, but those in sub-Saharan Africa have been increasing in total and, in many countries, as a proportion of the population. Per capita production has fallen since the mid-1980's.

9. In addition to the chronically undernourished, millions of people suffer from transitory food insecurity due to civil strife and wars. Although food assistance may be provided to help the afflicted populace, the per person amount provided is too often insufficient for good health. The sharp reduction in food aid availability over the past 3 years has reduced the capacity to face crisis situations.

10. To bring each undernourished person to his or her respective energy requirement level (2,200 calories/day) would require, on average, an additional 570 calories/day. Given that cereals represent around 60 percent of the calorie supply of the population of the developing countries, this gap in cereals represents about 30 million tons of grains (compared with about 9-12 million tons of food aid in recent years). The food gap varies widely between regions, ranging from negligible in some Western industrialized countries to about 5 percent in the low-income, food-deficit countries (LIFDCs) and 10 percent in sub-Saharan Africa.

11. Marine fisheries, inland fisheries, and aquaculture are also significant contributors to food security and provide economic and social well-being. In 1994, developing countries netted \$13 billion from exports of fish and fish products. At the same time, many poor coastal communities are dependent upon artisanal fisheries.

12. The prospects for the future, as they emerge from FAO's *World Agriculture: Towards 2010* study (1995) (AT2010), suggest that, under the assumptions of the study, per capita food supplies in most developing countries will increase. For the developing countries as a whole, average per capita food supplies are projected to increase by 8 percent by the year 2010.

13. The FAO projects a potential substantial shortfall by 2010 in the supply of fish and fishery products. The FAO also projects that 68 percent of the demand for fish and fish products in 2010 will be from developing countries. Unless quick action is taken, the combination at the global level of population increase and economic growth, in conjunction with continued overfishing, excess fishing capacity, and degradation of the aquatic environment, will place enormous strains upon the fishery sector's capability to sustain its necessary contribution to food security.

14. Despite overall increases in food availability, the number of undernourished in the developing countries by the year 2010 is still projected to be between 700 to 800 million. The two regions expected to have the largest number of undernourished remain South Asia and sub-Saharan Africa. However, while in South Asia their number is projected to diminish, bringing their share of the total population close to the 12-percent average of developing countries as a whole, in sub-Saharan Africa the number of undernourished is projected to increase by about 100 million to more than 300 million, mostly in the LIFDCs.

15. The projected level of chronic undernutrition would exist in spite of increasing food imports in the developing countries. Net cereal imports are projected to expand from the nearly 90 million tons of 1989-91 to some 162 million tons in the year 2010. Large increases are foreseen for the Near East and North Africa (33 million tons) and Latin America and the Caribbean (15 million tons). Only a small number of countries in these regions currently face serious foreign exchange shortages. On the other hand, the near doubling in the net cereal trade deficit (from 27 to 50 million tons) foreseen for Africa, is more ominous given the precarious balance of payments situation in many of the countries in the region and the unfavorable prospects for many of them, especially those that must continue to finance their growing food import requirements from commodity export earnings. Overall, for developing countries, the aggregate cereal self-sufficiency ratio is expected to decline from 92 percent to 90 percent.

16. The prospects for a protracted prevalence of undernutrition for hundreds of millions of people would be the likely consequence of a 'business as usual' approach. Therefore, all efforts must be mobilized to reduce the incidence of undernutrition and malnutrition as fast and

on as broad a geographical scope as possible, so as to achieve by the year 2010 a better outcome than that projected in the AT2010 study.

17. The additional amount of food required to increase the per capita consumption of the projected 700-800 million undernourished to the level of average requirements for a healthy life is small relative to the requirements of world population. Therefore, the issue is not only whether the world as a whole can produce such additional amounts of food, but even more how to ensure that the countries with the largest concentration of undernourished improve their access to food. The FAO's AT2010 study projects that, even with increased commercial and concessional imports, sub-Saharan Africa in particular will need to boost local agricultural output, with required production growth estimated at 4.0 percent per annum for the next 20 years, as opposed to 2.0 percent during 1970-90. In an era of declining food aid and other assistance from donor countries, it is clear that much of the problem will have to be addressed by building local capacity. Building local capacity will, in turn, demand substantial investments in research, education, and training to boost sustainable production, where necessary and appropriate, and to address other root causes of food insecurity, such as poverty, unsound economic policies, population growth, and gender inequality.

18. The objectives that all countries, regions, and the international community have to strongly pursue to prevent dire predictions from materializing are raising world food production compatibly with sustainability of the natural resource base; improving natural conditions to enable indigenous people to harvest traditional foods on a sustainable basis; addressing rapid population growth; ensuring moderate cost of the growing food needs; raising and distributing incomes to enable the largest numbers to provide for their needs; providing food assistance where necessary and feasible to poor and vulnerable population groups; ensuring stability of food supplies and access; and establishing and maintaining peace.

19. The United States and Canada recognize the critical and special role played by NGOs, the private sector (including farmers), academia, and other organizations in addressing food security issues -- as advocates, implementors, and disseminators of knowledge and "best practices" and as entities already committed through their practical actions and programs to the goals of achieving food security and promoting sustainable development. Given the enormity of the task at hand, we strongly encourage the forging of new partnerships among governments, NGOs, the private sector, and universities to mutually support and reinforce each others' contributions to improved food security. In particular, collaborative arrangements between NGOs that have local knowledge and outreach and the private sector with management, financial, and technical expertise will create synergies leading to more effective results. The FAO's "Food for All" campaign may provide an ideal venue for further fostering and nurturing such partnerships.

II. FOOD SECURITY TRENDS, PROSPECTS, AND ISSUES IN THE NORTH AMERICAN REGION

1. Overall Food Security Situation and Prospects

20. The North American region has demonstrated a strong capability to produce and distribute food on a sustained basis over many decades. Its production, processing, and distribution systems are adequate to meet domestic needs for most foods and to sustain and expand major export activity. Based on favorable resources, market-sensitive policies, modern technologies, and sustainable production systems, the North American food industry will continue to respond to the growing domestic and international demand for food.

21. Agricultural production has doubled in the United States and Canada since World War II, while total input use (land, labor, machinery, chemicals, etc.) declined slightly. Agricultural productivity increased by an average of 2 percent per year in the United States and Canada, exceeding the growth rate for manufacturing. This growth in productivity has come largely from technological and biological innovation, with strong investment in new varieties of crops, breeds of animals, machinery, and equipment, including the rapid expansion in information systems. While productivity has been supported by a strong government contribution to human resource development, agricultural research, and rural extension, both countries seek to stimulate greater private investments, particularly in times of fiscal restraint. Cooperatives and other forms of community-based systems have played and continue to play an important role in the development of the food sector, both at the production and distribution levels.

22. Canadian and U.S. fisheries harvests increased substantially, particularly after the introduction of 200-mile exclusive fishing zones in the late 1970's, but catch of some species has declined significantly. Production from aquaculture has increased in recent years. North American consumers have a wide variety of fish products available to them in the marketplace not only from North America but from other countries around the world because Canada and the United States maintain an open trading environment for fishery products.

23. Most food-producing landscapes are a dynamic mixture of crop lands and forests. Modern forestry and silvicultural methods make it possible to manage forests within food-producing landscapes in a systematic and productive fashion. Forest products, whether for food or timber, provide diversified income sources that help stabilize the economy of agricultural regions. Extensive areas of Canada and the United States have reverted to forests in the past few decades. This helps restore soil and water resources, and provides a conservation reserve of potential crop lands. Forests, hedgerows, and windbreaks provide habitats for beneficial insects and birds that help limit crop pest outbreaks. They maintain supplies of wild food resources -- game, fish, and edible wild plants and fungi -- that are important to indigenous and rural communities throughout North America. These wild food

resources contribute directly to local dietary needs and provide additional revenues from food exports and recreational hunting and fishing.

24. The Canadian and U.S. food markets are relatively mature, and the share of income spent on food is less than 10 percent. Population growth rates are about 0.9 percent annually and are declining slightly. The per capita food supply of 3,600 calories daily is more than adequate to meet the needs of the population. The self-sufficiency ratios for cereals range from 125 to 150 percent in most years, making the region the leading exporter of grains with the capability to expand output.

25. The prospects for the food industries in the region are favorable. Cereals production is projected to grow in North America at the rate of 1.1 percent annually (AT2010). The capacity to achieve higher rates of growth remains, and will depend primarily on market demand and growing conditions. Exports of cereals from the region are expected to increase by at least 20 million metric tons by the year 2000 (OECD Agricultural Outlook).

2. Regional Food Security Trends, Issues, and Outlook

Policy Framework

26. An important requisite for success in improving North American food security has been the enactment and implementation of an appropriate policy framework. The North American food systems have developed under democratic forms of government that respect human rights and the role of the individual. The two countries have a similar legal and administrative framework to achieve fair, open, and safe food systems. The monetary and fiscal policies of both countries have provided conditions for a stable economy for investment, production, and trade.

27. The global environment for production and trade in food has been changing dramatically. The emergence of integrated markets, urbanization and evolving consumer demands, and developments in technology and information systems, combined with less government intervention, are making food production and distribution systems much more sensitive to global food needs. In North America, there are common trends toward lower government transfers, deregulation, and decoupled farm programs. The food processing and distribution industries have undertaken restructuring and modernization programs, largely on a continental market basis. An expansion of the service industry has accompanied changes in lifestyles and eating habits. Government programs have been implemented to improve the social access to food through improved health, education, and nutrition safety nets for vulnerable people. Adjustment and adaptation programs are available to assist producers and industries to respond to economic and policy changes, to improve the environment, and to stimulate rural development.

28. The continued capacity of the U.S. food system to contribute to both domestic and international food security has been strengthened by adoption of the new Federal Agriculture Improvement and Reform Act of 1996. The United States has removed commodity deficiency payments and acreage set-asides, and introduced declining direct transition payments to support farm incomes. The Conservation Reserve Program is being continued with more flexibility for early termination of contracts and greater emphasis on the enrollment of environmentally sensitive land. This Act will increase the responsiveness of the farm sector to changing market conditions, and continue to provide programs for publicly supported research and incentives for resource conservation and sustainable production. The Act also broadened the Food Security Commodity Reserve to be more responsive to changing grain needs.

29. A series of agricultural policy reforms have been introduced in Canada that will enhance its domestic and international food security. These changes include programs to expand agricultural trade and market development, to accelerate adaptation to new types of production, and to improve coordination to ensure a safe and high-quality food supply. To facilitate production decisions based on market opportunities while maintaining a secure agricultural sector, most of the commodity safety-net programs have been replaced by a decoupled, income safety net and crop insurance. To improve the competitiveness of the Canadian grain marketing, handling, and transportation system, considerable deregulation and restructuring is underway, including elimination of transportation subsidies. The cooperative marketing and price-pooling system for several key commodities in Canada helps ensure orderly marketing and an equitable sharing of market revenues among producers. Food inventories are maintained by the private sector and the marketing system normally maintains adequate supplies from one season to the next. To promote conservation and enhance the resource base and to protect the environment, a long-term acreage diversion program is maintained.

30. Both Canada and the United States maintain programs to conserve and enhance the resource base and protect the environment. The United States and Canada have the capacity to respond to greater global demand for grain. The objective is to ensure the future viability and sustainability of the food and agricultural capabilities of North America.

31. Hunting, fishing, and gathering provide important food sources for indigenous people in Canada and the United States. Programs are provided by both Canada and the United States to assist in protecting the fragile resource base on which much of this activity depends. Integrated forest, marine, and land-use systems are being encouraged to achieve a balance between traditional and contemporary uses.

32. Canada and the United States have based their fisheries management policies on the principles of conservation and sustainable development. Fishery policies focus on applying the precautionary approach to fisheries management and on trade liberalization. Canada and the United States have played significant roles in successful negotiation of the UN Agreement on the Conservation and Management of Straddling Fish Stocks and Highly Migratory Fish

Stocks and the FAO Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries. Both countries actively promote implementation of these documents in many ways, including by strengthening and creating regional and subregional fisheries management organizations and arrangements with regard to stocks on the high seas and also by promoting the sustainable and environmentally sound growth of aquaculture in coastal and inland waters.

33. Sustainable forest management policies and programs make important contributions to long-term food security in North America as in other regions of the world. In addition to providing a direct source of some foods, forests support agricultural production by helping to manage soil and water systems and by controlling wind. They also provide fuel, medicines, and essential nutrients that increase the nutritional impact of other foods, support livestock systems, and provide genetic resources for the improvement of food crops.

Research, Technology, and Dissemination

34. Agricultural research and extension have provided the foundation for technological innovation and productivity growth in Canada and the United States, which in turn, have been the basis for cooperative efforts to enhance global food production. Early activities focused on the development of crop varieties, livestock breeding, and production, grading, and inspection systems to suit local resources and conditions. The emphasis on production and rural extension was extended to resource conservation, disease and pest control, food processing, food safety requirements, and the development of environmentally sustainable food and agricultural systems. Through increased private sector research and the transfer of modern technologies, a diversified, commercial, and competitive food industry has emerged in North America.

35. Agricultural research collaboration between U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) scientists and the private sector increased following the passage of the Technology Transfer Act of 1986. Under the Act's provisions, government scientists and private companies each agreed to commit resources to developing specific new technologies, with the public sector typically focusing on basic research and the private sector on product development and marketing. The private sector's interest in agricultural research was further enhanced in the United States and Canada by the strengthening of intellectual property rights.

36. Fisheries research in Canada and the United States includes efforts to promote and strengthen scientific research as the fundamental basis for conservation and sustainable development of fisheries and aquaculture activities to ensure food security, as well as to provide scientific and technical cooperation and support for countries with lesser research capabilities. This includes programs aiming to apply a precautionary approach, to strengthen environmentally sound aquaculture, to minimize nontarget bycatch and discards, to optimize use of underutilized resources, and to develop and use selective, environmentally safe, and cost-effective fishing gear and techniques.

37. Forest science, fishery science, and basic biological sciences such as ecology, taxonomy, and genetics provide a wider knowledge base that enhances the sustainability of food-producing systems. Research in natural ecosystems adjacent to crop lands can provide cost-effective methods of managing agricultural waste products. Breakthroughs in pest control or biotechnology made in one particular sector often find applications in other sectors.

38. Recent research indicates a warming of the global climate. Research on the impacts of climate change and on natural climate variability, such as droughts and floods, facilitates long-term food security planning. Research in natural climate variability, which is systematically produced, distributed, and applied in climate forecast information, provides a useful tool for early warning of changes in ecological systems that may threaten, or enhance, a nation's food security.

39. Building on climatic factors, Canadian research and technology has emphasized quality and the production of safe food in a healthy environment. Federal research and development is conducted both in-house through a nationwide network of research centers, and through arrangements with the private sector, universities, and the provinces. These activities currently emphasize conserving the genetic and resource base, developing sustainable agricultural systems, improving technologies for food safety and quality, and contributing to the competitiveness of the sector. Joint efforts are conducted with international partners to advance food research and technology within North America and internationally, contributing to food security on a global basis.

40. The rational use of appropriate technology and the conservation and sustainable use of natural resources is essential to maintaining agricultural productivity on a medium- and long-term basis. Sustainable agriculture, including dryland agriculture, involves the development of an integrated system of plant and animal production practices that recognizes the impact of climate factors on food production and the importance of protecting and enhancing environmental quality and the natural resource base. Such practices serve the long-term objectives of satisfying as well as enhancing the long-term economic viability of agricultural production and the quality of life for society as a whole. The U.S. and Canadian Governments, working with state and provincial authorities, are integrating environmental sustainability into all policies and programs.

Public and Private Sector Responsibility

41. In North America, as in other industrialized regions, the private sector performs the dominant role in achieving economic growth, employment, and income. In today's global economy, this requires open and market-oriented economic systems to permit the efficient use of resources, and to provide opportunities to trade. The U.S. and Canadian Governments have established macroeconomic policies and a regulatory environment conducive to balanced,

sustainable economic expansion. Although the Canadian and U.S. systems developed differently, there is a common shift toward more open, market-sensitive policies.

42. All levels of government and the food industry work together in both countries to provide safe and abundant food and water supplies. Yet, despite advances in technology, public health problems such as food-borne disease occasionally do occur through microbial or chemical contamination of food. The U.S. and Canadian Governments protect the safety of the domestic food supply in several ways, including the regulation of food additives, manufacturing processes, food labelling, and food inspection, as well as in-plant inspection and enforcement actions. They also regulate product imports to the North American market.

43. At the U.S. Federal level, the USDA, the Food and Drug Administration (FDA), and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) are primarily responsible for ensuring the safety of food supplies. The USDA is responsible for inspection of meat and poultry products at the processing level, for egg safety, and for on-farm efforts to improve food safety and quality. The FDA is responsible for safety of all other foods, including retail sales of processed foods and for fish and shellfish. The EPA is responsible for regulating the use of pesticides and other farm chemicals, which may pose a health risk to consumers when residues are present in the foods they eat.

44. Agriculture is a shared jurisdiction in Canada, and both Federal and Provincial programs and regulations affect this sector and the food industry. The Federal Government plays a lead role in trade development, income support, research, inspection, development assistance, and food aid. The provinces focus more on rural development, education and extension, resource conservation, and the environment, although joint programs exist in these areas. Canada provides food regulatory services similar to those available in the United States. A newly organized single Food Inspection Agency will provide all inspection services related to food safety, economic fraud, trade-related requirements, and animal and plant health programs. Health Canada will retain responsibility for establishing inspection policy and also for regulating the use of pesticides, which may cause a health risk to consumers. Programs and activities are maintained in both countries to improve nutritional health of their people.

45. Management of fisheries is a federal responsibility in Canada, while it is a shared responsibility between the states and the Federal Government in the United States. Responsibilities related to fish processing and aquaculture are shared between Federal and Provincial or State governments. Government is responsible for helping ensure that fish resources are conserved and that industry meets quality and health standards for fish products. In pursuing their fishery management activities, both countries are partnering with industry, native, sports fishing, and environmental groups.

46. In North America, both the public and private sectors are heavily involved in agricultural research and the development of new technologies. In the United States, public support for agricultural research has remained roughly constant in real terms over the past

decade, about half provided by the Federal Government and the other half by the states. Private agricultural research increased by an estimated one-third in that period. Public investment in research, development, and dissemination is being maintained in Canada at a relatively high level, during a period of limited public budgets. The Federal Government accounts for roughly half of total agri-food research and development (R&D) in Canada. It focuses on research of national significance that the private sector could not provide profitably, working alone. Provincial governments are responsible for technology transfer, extension, and applied research within provincial boundaries. Their expenditures account for about one-quarter of the total. Farmers, processors, industry, and universities carry out profitable R&D and convert R&D into saleable goods and services. The proportion of private sector investment in agri-food research in Canada has grown over the past 5 years from one-third to about one-half of the amount invested by the Federal Government.

Safety Nets and Vulnerable Groups

47. The Canadian and U.S. Governments also recognize that the production of an adequate national food supply does not ensure food security for all individuals. Despite advances in income levels, food availability, and nutrition in both countries, there are people in rural areas, indigenous communities, and inner cities where long distances, limited access to transportation, or inadequate financial resources restrict their ability to purchase food for an adequate diet. For some people, food security problems are compounded by poor facilities for cooking and food storage or limited skills in food preparation and home economics. The restructuring of economies, evolving populations and social structures, and changing dietary patterns of indigenous people contribute to health and nutritional problems. Both countries recognize the special nutritional needs of pregnant women, post-partum women, and children. Canada and the United States have different safety-net approaches, but these programs have similar objectives. Agricultural development will have a greater impact on food security when coupled with efforts to improve family incomes, health, and nutrition.

48. The United States, largely through USDA, has developed a strong programmatic response to problems of domestic food insecurity. While significant problems remain with regard to food access and nutrition for some people, public- and private-sector efforts continue to work toward food security for all. Safety-net programs for vulnerable groups in the United States include food-assistance programs targeted at low-income individuals, programs to encourage healthy eating, and actions to promote food safety and quality. A series of income and medical safety-net programs also indirectly affect household food security by maintaining adequate incomes for the elderly, disabled, and economically vulnerable. USDA administers 16 food-assistance programs whose goals are to improve nutritional status by providing access to a more nutritious diet, and to improve the eating habits of the nation's children. The USDA, in partnership with the State governments, provides a safety net to help meet the basic nutritional needs of eligible low-income people. The USDA food-assistance programs take a variety of forms, differing by size, form of benefit, and target population. The Food Stamp

Program, the National School Lunch Program, and the Special Supplemental Food Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) account for nearly 90 percent of total food-assistance outlays.

49. Despite the generally high level of supplies of healthy food in Canada, disparities in access to food and in nutritional well-being exist. Both government and community programs help redistribute income and provide support to vulnerable Canadians; among the most vulnerable groups are female, lone-parent families, and Aboriginal people. In Canada the principal social safety-net programs helping vulnerable people to purchase food include Federal Employment Insurance, Old Age Security, and the Child Tax Benefit, as well as Social Assistance provided by Provincial and Territorial governments. Equalization payments to provinces and the Canada Health and Social Transfer Program also help provinces provide a range of specialized programs, services, and supports to help meet the basic needs of disadvantaged groups. NGOs as well as local administrations, with support from Federal and Provincial governments, operate some of these programs and also, through volunteer and charitable sources, help provide access to food and other supports needed by vulnerable populations. As an example, the number of food banks has increased steadily since 1981. For people in Canada who are ill as a result of nutritional deficiencies, insured health services represent another vital component of the safety net. Canada has recently released its report "Nutrition for Health: An Agenda for Action," as a model to address nutrition issues in communities across Canada. It encourages policy and program development that is coordinated, multi-sectoral, supports new and existing partnerships, and promotes the efficient use of limited resources.

50. The United States provides various forms of assistance to American Indian and Alaska Native communities to address concerns relating to their food security. In particular, these communities have high levels of diet-related problems, including diabetes, poor nutrition, and obesity. Besides providing direct health care services through the Indian Health Service, the United States offers a number of programs to supplement food supplies in tribal communities. American Indians and Alaska Natives, like all Americans, are eligible to participate in the Federal food stamp, school lunch, and WIC programs. Further, tribal governments are recipients of Federal surplus food distributions. Individuals who meet income guidelines also may participate in the Federal Aid to Families with Dependent Children program, the Bureau of Indian Affairs' General Assistance program, and elderly adult meals programs, as well as tribal- and state-sponsored food-assistance programs.

51. The United States protects and enforces off-reservation Indian treaty rights, such as hunting, fishing, and gathering on Federal public lands. Hunting, fishing, and gathering represent a permanent means of subsistence and help ensure food security for tribes. Also, the United States provides technical assistance to Indian and Native farmers, ranchers, and landowners for management, protection, conservation, and development of agricultural resources.

52. In Canada, the Aboriginal people are a vulnerable group in terms of food security. Many Aboriginal communities rely upon a mix of wild and country foods and purchased food. They face food security challenges that encompass a wide range of issues, such as: low levels of employment; low average incomes as compared to the rest of the Canadian population; high costs of food, particularly in remote northern regions; poor nutrition; health problems, such as diabetes; and threats to country-food resources from pollution and overexploitation.

53. The broad policy framework for addressing Canadian Aboriginal food security comes from a number of sources, such as: the Federal Government's high priority on settlement of land claims and the implementation of the inherent right to self-government, sustainable development goals for the various sectors, and the strengthening of community economic development and management of health care. At another level, the government supports a variety of programs and initiatives to deal with specific issues, for example: a subsidy for the shipment of nutritious food to isolated Aboriginal communities to address high food costs, and a prenatal nutrition program to improve the health of the mother and child and to increase awareness of nutrition.

Trade and Development Cooperation

54. Trade performs a key and growing role in the North American economies, and in achieving a higher level of food security on a global basis. The United States and Canada make major contributions to world food security by remaining large and reliable suppliers of agricultural commodities to their trading partners and in maintaining relatively open markets. North American exports are major sources of food in many countries and they are becoming increasingly important as agricultural and fisheries trade has grown more rapidly than production over many decades. Both countries are committed to sustaining their strong capabilities to supply food to their trading partners. They will also continue to press for further trade liberalization through future agricultural and fisheries negotiations in the World Trade Organization (WTO), the expansion of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), and through other regional trade initiatives, such as the Free Trade Area of the Americas and the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) liberalization process. Both countries are proponents of trade with developing countries as a stimulant to economic development, and believe more open agricultural and fisheries markets through multilateral negotiations will promote greater market stability. This will stimulate trade, production, and economic development in all regions.

55. It is recognized that adequate food supplies on a global basis do not necessarily provide food security for all. The United States is the world's major supplier of food aid; Canada is also a significant food aid donor. Through their aid policies, both countries have emphasized the importance of providing development assistance to support developing countries committed to their pursuit of sustainable development and improved food security. This development assistance takes the form of financial support, technical collaboration, and training. These aid

policies also benefit Canada and the United States through the exchanges of scientific knowledge and materials, enhanced trade and investment opportunities, and greater international cooperation. However, domestic budget balancing pressures are contributing to decreasing development assistance budgets in both countries. The trends toward retrenchment of direct government involvement in agriculture and multilateral agricultural trade liberalization are likely to bring significant changes in the environment for development assistance, food aid, and trade and their roles in economic development and food security. For example, government-induced surpluses and public stockholding are expected to decline, which will increase the relative costs of food aid for donor countries, make food aid budgets more transparent, and shift the food aid focus from government-held commodities to market purchases. Properly functioning markets normally provide for the carrying of stocks from season to season. International institutions such as the World Food Programme have established emergency food aid response mechanisms. The International Monetary Fund has a facility to assist countries to respond to unanticipated food import costs.

56. Accelerated investment in national and international agricultural research and technological improvements is essential to meet food needs and demands at reasonable prices without irreversible degradation of the natural resource base. The Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR) has proven to be particularly effective in developing and promoting agricultural research in low-income developing countries and technology relevant for small farmers in developing countries. CGIAR's work is also of critical importance to ensure sustainability in the use of natural resources, to save biodiversity, to improve government policies through its policy research, and to strengthen national agricultural research institutions in developing countries.

57. With financial support declining in recent years, both the United States and Canada remain major supporters of international agricultural research. International research centers contribute to sustainable improvements in the productivity of agriculture, forestry, and fisheries in developing countries in ways that enhance nutrition and well-being, especially of low-income people. Over the past decade these themes have increasingly been integrated with: conservation and management of natural resources, including germplasm used in crop improvement; utilization of and postharvest technology for sectoral products; a strong focus on human dimensions such as poverty, gender, and other equity concerns including diet, nutrition, and family welfare; and development of appropriate policies to encourage productivity, food security, and poverty alleviation.

58. International research has been instrumental in improving the food security of millions of people in developing countries. Increased supplies of affordable staple foods have improved the diets of both urban and rural consumers. Productivity increases in agriculture, forestry, and fisheries also reduce pressures on fragile natural resources, which would otherwise be converted to unsustainable food production to improve rural food security and keep up with expanding populations.

59. The recognition that the interrelated issues of poverty, food security, and natural-resource conservation will continue to present major challenges well into the future has encouraged the CGIAR to broaden its partnerships in both developing and industrialized countries. The objective is to encourage global consultation on research agendas, increased collaboration, and more efficient use of limited resources. The United States and Canada seek to encourage these collaborative efforts through strengthened partnerships between the CGIAR and their research communities. Both countries also seek to ensure continued open access to the CGIAR's substantial germplasm collections for scientists in all countries. Continued strong support to the CGIAR thus remains highly consistent with both countries' development assistance programs and priorities.

60. The exodus of rural populations to cities around the world has significantly increased urban food insecurity. By 2025, it is estimated that the number of people in developing countries living in cities will quadruple -- from one billion to four billion. Massive urbanization will vastly increase the stress on markets and basic infrastructure. This present and coming reality needs to be further examined and addressed. The United States and Canada call for greater focus and coordination among appropriate multilateral institutions and national and community organizations in meeting food insecurity in urban and peri-urban areas. Creating a healthy environment for food production and related job opportunities in these areas may help to ameliorate the problem.

3. Regional Implications for Food Security

61. Even though food-insecure people do exist in North America, for the majority of the population, domestic food security has been achieved in the United States and Canada. This reflects the success of both nations' agricultural and fisheries production, processing, and distribution sectors that have provided abundant supplies of food in a variety of forms during all seasons of the year at increasingly affordable prices. The ability of the North American region not only to provide adequate supplies of food for the region's population at declining real cost, but also to export a high volume of foodstuffs on a commercial basis and as food aid is due in large part to a competitive food industry supported by:

- stable political and enabling policy environments,
- broad and continuous investment in human resource development and agricultural, fisheries, and forestry research and extension,
- an understanding of natural resource conservation practices,
- research on impacts of climate variability on the food supply,
- efficiently operating markets and information systems,
- a modern physical and institutional infrastructure,
- an open economy that actively seeks international markets and is responsive to international food requirements, and
- a pervasive safety-net system.

It is the objective of both countries to use their food production and distribution knowledge and capabilities to help to achieve food security on a global basis.

III. ACTIONS TO ADDRESS GLOBAL FOOD SECURITY

62. The challenge of the World Food Summit is for governments, in cooperation with civil society, to take actions to improve the well-being of the 800 million chronically undernourished, and to prevent and respond to emergency situations that place people at risk of transitory food insecurity. The World Food Summit must signal all countries to assess their contributions both to food security in their own countries and to global food security.

63. The outcome of the World Food Summit must be coordinated with and built upon the actions adopted at and arising from previous international fora including Children (1990); Environment and Development (Rio, 1992); Nutrition (Rome, 1992); Human Rights (Vienna, 1993); Trade (Marrakech, 1994); Population (Cairo, 1994); Social (Copenhagen, 1995); Women (Beijing, 1995); Habitat, (Istanbul, 1996); and Plant Genetic Resources (Leipzig, 1996). The World Food Summit will benefit from the proceedings of the FAO 50th Anniversary Symposium (Quebec 1995), entitled "People at the Heart of Development," which emphasized food security through knowledge.

64. Producers have made great progress in increasing global food supplies. However, many countries and households have not achieved adequate food availability. A primary emphasis of all countries should be to achieve food self-reliance: the ability of a country to ensure that adequate food is available to meet the needs of its population from a combination of domestic production and importation of food at commercial terms. The principal responsibility for food self-reliance rests with national governments. Donors can only supplement and reinforce national efforts, not substitute for them.

65. Food security is fundamentally provided for at the household level. The household must deal with the challenges of integrating the complex aspects of food security: production, processing, and marketing of food; intrahousehold distribution of consumption; adequate nutrition; and the first line of health care and environmental sanitation. The ability of producers and households to achieve food security depends on a positive and reinforcing set of national policies, particularly: poverty reduction; an enabling environment for the private sector; promotion of sustainable, integrated natural resource management and production; encouragement to community and local organizations; and the provision of basic social services and adequate safety nets.

66. One of the most basic causes of food insecurity is poverty. Actions to improve food security must be based on a market-oriented approach to increase a country's economic growth, much of it due to increases in agricultural productivity, the benefits of which are widely distributed among its citizens through improved employment opportunities. Poverty

reduction also requires investments in the human capacity of the poor so that they can take advantage of these opportunities. There are no simple solutions. Democratic governments may change, but the food insecurity/poverty/alleviation priority should be broadly shared by the populations at large as well as by interest groups within the civil society.

67. Food security exists when all people at all times have physical and economic access to sufficient food to meet their dietary needs for a productive and healthy life. Food security has three dimensions:

- **Availability** of sufficient quantities of food of appropriate quality supplied through domestic production or imports. Imports can be commercial or in the form of food assistance. Also important is improved distribution, including reduced waste and improved movement over time and space and in form. Food production should be based on the conservation and sustainable use of natural resources.
- **Access** by households and all individuals to adequate resources to acquire appropriate foods for a nutritious diet. Access depends upon income available (level and distribution) to the household, the price of food and productive assets, and information, knowledge, and authority, particularly of women, to influence intrahousehold decision-making.
- **Utilization** of food through adequate diet, water, sanitation, and health care. Food utilization is the proper digestion and absorption of nutrients in food by the human body.

68. Actions to respond to the challenge of global food insecurity are organized by following six areas that identify the most essential objectives and actions. The first four identify basic conditions, applying both to developing countries and to the United States and Canada, where applicable, for achieving food security. The fifth identifies the international response to supplement and reinforce best efforts by food-insecure countries. The sixth is monitoring and follow-up.

1. Creating an Enabling Economic, Political, Legal, and Social Environment

Basis for Action

69. Food security is an evolutionary, not a revolutionary process; it takes time and continuity. A long-term commitment by national governments to improving food security is essential. Political, social, and macroeconomic stability, together with a sound legal framework, sustainable use of natural resources, and a trade and exchange-rate system that provides equal opportunity for all participants and builds strong links with the global economy, are necessary conditions for success. On the other hand, attracting resources, either internally

or externally, in a more competitive world is difficult, if not impossible, in countries where domestic political, social, and economic stability and a sound legal framework are not well entrenched and where integration with world markets for goods and capital is inadequate. Pollution and wasteful use of natural resources lead to a medium- or long-term failure of food security strategies. War can result in serious setbacks to food security. Even after conflict ceases, the presence of land mines throughout rural areas prevent an effective, quick return to agricultural production.

70. The linkage between stability and prosperity on the one hand and the effectiveness of institutions on the other has become widely recognized. Good governance and democracy are essential elements of an environment conducive to sound political and economic management. Public institutions should be responsive and representative. Mechanisms should exist to allow citizens to pursue their economic, political, and cultural affairs within a legal and political context that is respectful of all human rights and fundamental freedoms. The principles of good governance and democracy and pro-growth with equity are universal and central to the sound management of society as well as its human and material resources.

71. Effective food utilization, which is required for proper nutrition, is impeded by ill health, a major problem in most developing countries due to poor access to clean water, sanitation, basic health services, and health education. Ill health also impedes efforts to increase food availability and access as it reduces the productivity of human labor. In addition, the magnitude of the task of producing enough food to satisfy nutritional needs without environmental degradation depends on the rate of population growth. An enabling environment for food security includes providing an adequate health environment for proper food utilization and slowing population growth rates through, among other things, voluntary family planning.

72. Efforts to achieve food security, promote rural development, and facilitate balanced and sustainable urban development require active and equal partnerships between nongovernmental and private sources of assistance, local community associations, and entrepreneurs (including farmers); governments should participate in all these partnerships. The mobilization, empowerment, and participation of all actors within civil society is critical for the achievement of local good governance.

73. There is a growing recognition of the interdependence of population, development, and environmental issues. Population, poverty, patterns of production and consumption, and the environment are so closely interlinked that none of them can be considered in isolation. Economic growth in the context of sustainable development will enhance the ability of countries to meet the pressures of expected population growth; will facilitate the demographic transition in countries where there is an imbalance between demographic rates and social, economic, and environmental goals; will permit the balance and integration of the population dimension into other development-related policies; and will contribute to the objective of obtaining world food security.

74. Too many development policies are imposed from above or from outside. The rights, responsibilities, capacities, and leadership of local communities, their associations, and their entrepreneurs must be recognized and encouraged. For example, indigenous knowledge is increasingly being explored and integrated into research and in management applications, such as in agriculture, natural resources, fisheries, and forestry in the North American region and throughout the world.

75. Women make a major contribution to land stewardship, food production, transformation, marketing, and nutrition. Specifically, women make a major contribution to global and national food availability through their labor in and management of food production. They also contribute significantly to household food access through their labor and food purchases. Women are the key players in food utilization, making up most of the care-taking labor required for maintaining the health of household members, especially children and the elderly. Yet women face economic, social, cultural, and political obstacles that men do not face, constraining their abilities to contribute fully to achieving food security. Women often are excluded from effective participation in economic, political, social, and environmental decision-making and lack access to education, credit, and the ownership of land, which are critical if they are to fully contribute to poverty reduction and food security. Gender equality and the empowerment of women are necessary preconditions for achieving meaningful food security and sustainable development.

Objectives

76. a) Open and stable political environment, with peace and stability internally and externally.
- b) Pro-growth-with-equity economic environment.
- c) Increased urban and rural employment and enhanced ability of the poor to purchase food and/or increase food production through development of the agricultural sector.
- d) Sustainability as a fundamental basis for development.
- e) Full participation of both men and women in all aspects of food security.
- f) Healthy and early stabilization of global population.

Actions to be Taken

National governments, in cooperation with civil society, will seek to:

77. a) Promote democratic forms of government based on the principles of accountability and transparency in public institutions and the rule of law.
- b) Establish long-term sustainable development strategies.
- c) Prepare a National Food Security Plan and implement strategies, based on analysis of underlying causes, extent, and locations of food insecurity, that establish explicit food security goals, priorities for action (sequencing activities when appropriate), and accountable and measurable results.
- d) Adopt economic policies that:
- (1) Pursue national budgets that balance public sector expenditures with revenues.
 - (2) Support a foreign exchange system that seeks and maintains an equilibrium level through open market forces.
 - (3) Pursue trade liberalization within the context of the multilateral trading system.
 - (4) Ensure that rights to land ownership and transfer and its produce are effective and nondiscriminatory.
 - (5) Promote a legal, regulatory, judicial, and policy framework that ensures that private markets operate competitively, and without distortions.
 - (6) Ensure that principles of sustainability are respected.
- e) Strengthen conservation policies and practices to ensure that the natural resource base is sustainable.
- f) Promote gender equality.
- g) Strengthen areas of social investment important for longer term food security and development, food utilization, and population stabilization, notably through primary health care, including voluntary family planning, health and nutrition education, safe water, and sanitation.
- h) Develop regional and national conflict prevention and resolution mechanisms.

2. Enhancing Sustainable Food System Capacity

Basis for Action

78. The food system embraces a set of processes that produce (and consume) agricultural commodities on farms and fishery products on vessels and on shore, transform these commodities into food in the marketing sector, and sell the food to consumers to satisfy nutritional as well as aesthetic and social needs. A successful food system is dependent upon five primary requisites: 1) an enabling policy framework (discussed in the previous section), 2) technology development, 3) traditional knowledge and practices, 4) facilitative rural infrastructure and marketing services, and 5) proper environmental conditions.

79. Sustainable development of the domestic agricultural and fisheries sectors is critical to national, community, and household food security for a number of reasons. More than half of the poorest people in developing countries still live in rural areas as low-resource farm and fishery families or landless rural laborers. Improving sustainable agricultural productivity for these people will generate additional food and income to directly improve their well-being, as well as increase volumes of low-cost staple foods that are available for sale to the urban poor. There are additional significant benefits in terms of economic spinoffs within local economies: improved husbandry and conservation of natural resources to preserve their long-term economic and ecological potential and moderation of the flow of impoverished rural and coastal families into difficult urban environments.

80. Future food security gains will be dependent upon increasing sustainable productivity, including genetic improvement, which is a function of changing the plant, animal, fish, or process or the environment in which they grow or in which the process occurs. Research to improve plants, animals, fish, and processes or the environments in which they grow or operate is essential to achieve sustainable productivity gains.

81. Sustainable agriculture depends upon a sustainable natural resource base. Food production is directly dependent upon adequate soil and water resources. The essential role of forests in maintaining productive agricultural systems is well recognized. It is also widely acknowledged that unsustainable agricultural practices have led to widespread ecological degradation and deforestation in many countries, often destroying the very soil and water conservation functions necessary to support downstream and adjacent agriculture. This trend must be reversed if agriculture, fisheries, and forests are to be sustained.

82. Effective conservation measures for capture fisheries are critical to maintaining the contribution of these fisheries to food security. These measures should address catch of nontarget species and discards and overcapacity in some of these fisheries. Prospects for increases in production exist mainly in aquaculture and nontraditional, underutilized fisheries. Priority should be placed on local communities to ensure a sustainable contribution from subsistence, artisanal, and commercial fisheries to their food security.

Objectives

83. a) Continuously improved, science-based sustainable technologies and practices that are environmentally, socially, politically, and economically adapted to farmer and fisher needs and conditions.
- b) Enacted policies and practices in each country that conserve forest, soil, and water resources, establishing the fundamental environmental conditions for sustainable agriculture, through participatory approaches involving the forest communities and forest dwellers and voluntary approaches that provide incentives to the private sector to practice sustainable forest management.
- c) Improved rural infrastructure, including appropriate services, that facilitates efficient movement of new knowledge, inputs, and services to farmers, and movement of agricultural products to markets.
- d) Increased food production while preserving food quality and maintaining the proper environmental conditions.
- e) Improved adherence to effective conservation measures for fisheries, increased capability in fisheries management techniques and research initiatives, and sustainable development of environmentally sound aquaculture and nontraditional, underutilized fisheries.

Actions to be Taken

National governments, in cooperation with civil society, will seek to:

84. a) Eliminate policy distortions that lead to bias against the agricultural and fisheries sectors, and establish policies that specifically promote food security.
- b) Adopt policies that provide an effective incentive structure for sustainable management of natural resources. Ensure that national agricultural, fisheries, forestry, and natural resource policies, plans, and practices are developed and implemented in a holistic approach, recognizing their fundamental ecological interdependence.
- c) Increase emphasis on research, in particular to support increased production of dryland agriculture, to improve food processing and distribution, and to reduce postharvest losses. Continue support to national agricultural research systems and make sustained public investments in technology adaptation and

dissemination and knowledge generation and transfer, in the context of enlightened public policy incentives and institution building.

- d) Sustain the financial support and guidance of the CGIAR system. Support agricultural education to ensure skilled human resources for transforming traditional agriculture and improve the ability of extension services and other technology transfer agents to carry new technologies and practices to farm communities.
- e) Enhance capacity to develop and use climate information for early warning to mitigate climate-related impacts, such as droughts, floods, and extreme climate events, which threaten global food security.
- f) Invest in rural infrastructure including roads, irrigation, electricity, and communications and, where appropriate, provide rural and coastal infrastructure services that are nondiscriminatory, more efficient, user-responsive, environmentally friendly, and resourceful in using financing from both the public and private sectors.
- g) Promote and ensure the effective functioning of markets for inputs and products. Public intervention is required to:
 - (1) Ensure honest weights and measures and other standards of commerce.
 - (2) Facilitate accurate, prompt, and open exchange of price and other market information.
 - (3) Facilitate free entry and exit of firms to markets.
 - (4) Promote functioning land and water markets with a legal system that allows owners to buy and sell land and water domestically and a banking system that allows land and water as effective collateral.
- h) Encourage and facilitate the availability of adequate credit, especially for microenterprise lending directed to women.
- i) Promote the production, processing, storage, and marketing of food in ways that conserve soil, water, and atmospheric and biological resources (including genetic resources) important to agriculture and that use them sustainably.
- j) Support technologies and practices that reduce food waste and postharvest losses.
- k) Promote an integrated approach to conservation and management that combines fisheries research, resource management, enforcement, and effective partnering arrangements with industry and other interested groups to ensure that the

resources are sustainably harvested, that discards and bycatch of nontarget species are minimized, and that overcapacity is reduced.

- l) Ensure effective implementation of the UN Agreement on the Conservation and Management of Straddling Fish Stocks and Highly Migratory Fish Stocks and the FAO Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries, including the Agreement to Promote Compliance. Promote aquacultural development in an environmentally sustainable manner.
- m) Recognize the utility of the International Model Forest Network as a tool for testing concepts of sustainable forest management, particularly the concept of integrated resource management through the application of leading-edge science and technology and new and innovative approaches and techniques.
- n) Reach a consensus on priority actions to promote sustainable forest management based on recommendations of the UN Commission on Sustainable Development's Intergovernmental Panel on Forests and promote international trade in tropical timber products from sustainably managed forests through the International Tropical Timber Organization.
- o) Take actions to better conserve and sustainably utilize plant genetic resources in accordance with the Global Plan of Action adopted by the International Technical Conference on Plant Genetic Resources.

3. Implementing Freer International Trade

Basis for Action

85. An open global trading system contributes to food security directly through allowing freer movement of food across national borders and thus improved food availability in food-deficit countries. It also contributes to food security through generating economic efficiencies from comparative advantage and stimulating economic growth, which is critical to poverty reduction and thus food access. By far, the largest source of international capital is realized through international investment and trade of goods and services. In 1992, the merchandise exports of low- and middle-income countries were estimated to total more than \$750 billion, much in excess of official development assistance.

86. The Uruguay Round was the first round of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade negotiations to address comprehensive reform to improve international competition in agricultural trade. The progressive implementation of the results of the Uruguay Round as a whole will generate increasing opportunities for trade expansion and economic growth to the benefit of all participants. Important positive steps were taken to eliminate nontariff barriers,

reduce tariffs, introduce discipline on export subsidies, and base sanitary and phytosanitary measures on sound science. The Uruguay Round result enables developing countries to apply their commitments at reduced levels and to adopt a longer transition period to adjust to world market conditions. The least-developed countries were exempted from agricultural tariff reduction and export subsidy commitments, and are permitted a longer implementation period for other disciplines. The benefits from Uruguay Round trade liberalization will assist developing countries to effectively integrate their economies into the global trading system. The Uruguay Round is likely to generate global income gains of up to \$200 billion a year, with somewhere between a third and a half of the gains going to developing countries, primarily to the ones that have reduced their own protection and embraced the benefits of earlier reforms.

87. The upcoming round of agricultural negotiations foreseen in Article 20 of the Uruguay Round Agreement on agriculture provides an important opportunity to continue the reform process and build towards a fair and market-oriented agricultural trading system. Regional trade initiatives such as NAFTA, the Free Trade Area of the Americas, and the APEC liberalization process provide additional venues to seek freer trade.

88. Despite the progress made in the Uruguay Round of multilateral trade negotiations, significant barriers to trade in fish products continue to exist. Eliminating trade barriers is especially important for developing countries that may wish to advance their economic development and food security by exporting high-value fish resources and importing low-cost food products. Regional trade initiatives provide venues to seek freer trade as does the WTO to address tariffs and nontariff barriers, particularly subsidies.

89. The current situation in the international grain market is abnormal relative to most of the period since the World Food Conference (WFC) of 1974. It is recognized that current higher prices present serious difficulties for low-income, food importing countries and put pressure on food aid availabilities. The increases in grain prices have arisen primarily from weather-related conditions rather than the implementation of commitments negotiated in the Uruguay Round. Short-term challenges to food supplies should be addressed through regular multilateral, bilateral, and commercial mechanisms. As in the past, world production is expected to respond rapidly to the high-price situation. It is important to remember that the widespread concerns over world food shortages leading to the WFC were short-lived and proved not to be a reliable indication of the future. It is projected by most analyses that the current situation will be reversed within 1 or 2 years. It is essential that the World Food Summit focus on the long-term structural problems underlying food insecurity and undernourishment in the world, and that countries deal with short-term challenges to food supplies through regular mechanisms.

Objectives

90. a) Rapidly growing trade in agricultural commodities and food products, without undue fluctuations in prices.
- b) Continued ability to import food requirements.

Actions to be Taken

National governments, in cooperation with civil society, will seek to:

91. a) Implement Uruguay Round reforms.
- b) Urge countries to fully implement the decision on measures concerning the possible negative effects of the reform program on least-developed and net food-importing, developing countries should the implementation of the Uruguay Round reform program result in negative effects in terms of the availability of adequate supplies of basic foodstuffs from external sources on reasonable terms and conditions.
- c) Further liberalize agricultural and fisheries trade.
- d) Urge all countries to refrain from using export restrictions that limit the access of trading partners to agricultural products and prevent food products from reaching those that are most in need.
- e) Seek to increase regional and global trade opportunities that will encourage developing countries to become effectively integrated into the global trading system.
- f) Continue to develop and implement science-based standards for trade in food and agricultural products and inputs. Provide support, within resource limits, to developing countries to develop animal, plant, and human health measures based on international standards and sound science.

4. Improving Access to Food for Food-Insecure Groups, Including on an Emergency Basis

Basis for Action

92. Poverty, understood broadly, is the lack of resources required to meet such basic human needs as education, health, food and nutrition, water, sanitation, and shelter. It implies as well exclusion from full participation in social, political, legal, and economic decision systems. Poverty is one of the major causes of food insecurity, but food insecurity can also reinforce the cycle of poverty. Food insecurity detracts from people's ability to protect and sustain their broader livelihoods. Food-insecure people tend to be members of resource-poor households, and poor women and children are particularly vulnerable. While relief measures can be critical in addressing immediate survival needs, strategies that address poverty through a broader developmental framework improve access to food security in a more sustainable manner. A broad array of socioeconomic investments, especially for women, is necessary to reduce poverty. Enhancing labor-market opportunities and skill development for vulnerable people is critical to enhancing their self-reliance. Investing in human capacity through increasing income and improving health enables individuals to take advantage of new opportunities. Education, particularly of women, can lead to better nutrition in children. Providing safety nets for those who remain unable to take advantage of new opportunities or who experience temporary setbacks complements such a strategy.

93. Most poor and food-insecure people are located in regions of the developing world with poor natural and institutional resources and infrastructure. Those living in ecologically vulnerable areas suffer most from environmental degradation, given the more immediate effects of that degradation on the natural surroundings on which they depend for their livelihood. These are areas in which much of food aid is concentrated and which draw increasing proportions of declining donor resources for relief instead of development. Approaches are needed to promote the sustainable development of neglected areas in a cost-effective way.

94. The demand for emergency food aid doubled between 1989 and 1993 but has moderated over the past 2 years. Many countries appear to be caught in a cycle of dependency as food aid shipments grow and domestic agricultural output falls. Attention should be addressed to ensuring that short-term relief activities can build a foundation for longer term development efforts.

Objectives

95. a) Increased attention to the broader issues of sustainable livelihoods, with a view to overcoming basic causes of poverty and food insecurity in the longer term.

- b) Increased attention to the needs of food-deficit areas and households, with a first priority to ensuring quantitative needs, but also to ensuring adequate nutrition.
- c) Assistance, including food aid, consistent with, and integrated into, overall poverty-reduction and food-security programming strategies.
- d) Promotion of household food security, especially through the empowerment of women.
- e) Promotion of the development potential of resource-poor areas.

Actions to be Taken

National governments, in cooperation with civil society, will seek to:

- 96.
- a) Integrate into national planning for social and economic development strategies that advance explicit nutritional objectives, taking into account intrahousehold food distribution issues, different needs of household members (e.g., prenatal, early childhood, pregnant women), and micronutrient deficiencies to eliminate absolute poverty and reduce poverty in general.
 - b) Promote secure and gainful employment opportunities, with particular emphasis on women and indigenous groups, to alleviate poverty among both the rural and urban poor, including the implementation of complementary policies and measures such as utility pricing, credit provision, training, extension services, and investments in education and health.
 - c) Undertake research into appropriate agricultural techniques and technologies for marginal areas, including creative ways to "drought proof" resource-poor areas and to promote sustainable practices in degraded areas. Develop complementary institutional reforms that can also address these problems, including promotion of community resource management and securing property rights.
 - d) Ensure more opportunities for households and individuals through sustainable safety nets for the future, which will do more to help people secure their own food.
 - e) Develop early-warning systems (including nutritional surveillance) that provide information on local food situations, taking into account geographic features, seasonal fluctuations, and natural climate variability, in order to ensure that

local production and/or local markets make available safe and adequate food supplies to meet the energy and nutrient needs of the population.

- f) Provide timely, appropriate, and adequate emergency assistance, integrating these resources into overall development strategies and distributing food aid so as to promote rather than disrupt markets and, if possible, to create employment. Coordination with partners who will be present to work on the transitional and rehabilitative needs, beyond the immediate relief requirements, is critical.
- g) Avert the adverse consequences of disaster-induced loss of locally adapted crops and livestock by securing the safe duplication of genetic resources and establishing a standing capacity for their re-introduction.

5. Mobilizing More Effective International Efforts to Supplement and Reinforce National Commitments, Including on an Emergency Basis

Basis for Action

97. Countries themselves have the primary responsibility to put in place the political, economic, legal, and social frameworks necessary to enhance food security. In certain cases, governments are unable or unwilling to follow through on their responsibilities. Food security can be undermined by an inappropriate macroeconomic framework that discourages investment in broad-based economic growth; provides ineffective credit and pricing policies; discriminates against women and disadvantaged groups; provides ineffective support to social programs, including human resource development; and fails to provide a social safety net. A weak revenue base and ineffective government services all too often contribute to poverty and food insecurity. Failure to provide basic social services also contributes.

98. Donors have a critical role to play in promoting the adoption of appropriate policies and of truly accountable and effective government services and, where necessary, in providing technical and financial assistance to help developing countries reduce poverty and meet their food needs. In providing such support, donors should support the country's own strategies in this area, work on the basis of effective participation of those concerned, and ensure that assistance benefits both men and women, is well coordinated, and achieves the desired results. Global Official Development Assistance (ODA) trends over the past several years have shown a movement away from assistance to agricultural and rural development, in part because of complacency concerning global food security, but also because other development themes have come to the fore as Cold-War preoccupations have receded. Donors and their development partners must recognize the need to place renewed priority on food security broadly, and particularly on developing countries' agricultural sectors.

99. Food security problems are created and exacerbated by internal and extraterritorial conflicts and strife. Besides causing death and suffering, war and civil strife displace large segments of the population and disrupt food production and distribution. The international community will have to enhance the ability of individual countries, regional organizations, and the international system to prevent, mitigate, and resolve conflicts.

Objectives

100. a) Mobilization of ODA as fiscal situations permit for partner countries, especially those that are undertaking major efforts to enhance their food security.
Adoption of criteria of sustainability in the development of ODA strategies.
- b) Increased effectiveness of aid resources through enhanced coordination, the full and effective participation of beneficiaries at all stages of development planning and delivery, a greater focus on poverty and gender analysis in planning interventions, and greater focus on results rather than inputs.
- c) Enhanced conflict prevention and resolution mechanisms.

Actions to be Taken

Canada and the United States, in cooperation with other donors, governments, and civil societies, will seek to:

101. a) Promote dialogue to encourage all countries, and especially food-deficit countries, to put in place the economic, social, political, accountability, environmental, and other frameworks necessary for poverty reduction and food security.
- b) Urge the International Financial Institutions and UN agencies to advocate national policy reforms that would implement the necessary economic, social, political, accountability, and environmental frameworks necessary for poverty reduction and food security.
- c) Encourage national governments to take responsibility for conflict prevention and resolution, while also enhancing the ability of existing international machinery in these areas.
- d) Provide financial and technical support to and share their expertise with selected governments seeking to focus on the long-term reduction of poverty, putting in place appropriate policy frameworks and enhancing the effectiveness and

accountability/transparency of government services with particular emphasis on facilitating democratization; designing and implementing economic policy reforms; implementing and managing sustainable agricultural and fisheries research; establishing basic conditions for private and community-based marketing services to operate efficiently and effectively; and improving potable water, sanitation, population stabilization, primary health care, and cooking energy. Collaborate with selected governments and organizations that place high priority on food security by providing financial and technical support for key elements in national plans.

- e) Continue to support appropriate and productive agricultural and related research and programming carried out by national agricultural research systems (e.g., river blindness eradication in West Africa), which can serve to increase agricultural production in a sustainable manner. In light of future trends in population growth, the need to continue generating increases in sustainable food productivity and maintaining the outstanding performance of the CGIAR, donors must continue active oversight and major financial support to international agricultural research centers (IARCs) in the CGIAR.
- f) Encourage increased collaboration between IARCs and industrial countries' research communities to facilitate efficient and sustainable use of scarce resources, and the open sharing of knowledge, expertise, and germplasm. Attracting quality researchers is critical to obtaining effective research and developing countries should encourage initiatives that value agricultural research as a profession.
- g) Develop, promote, and facilitate the exchange of information on the use of efficient and standardized methodologies for the study of social, cultural, and economic characteristics of fishing and associated activities.
- h) Provide timely, appropriate, and adequate emergency assistance, integrating these resources into overall development strategies and distributing food aid so as to promote rather than disrupt local markets and, if possible, to create employment. Coordination with partners who will be present to work on the transitional and rehabilitative needs, beyond the immediate relief requirements, is critical.
- i) Improve the effectiveness of food aid by targeting the most needy, enhancing its economic impact, minimizing high overheads and transportation costs, and ensuring the sustainability of projects and achievement of desired results. Enhance food aid planning through the use of climate forecast information to anticipate need and distribute resources accordingly. Enhance the effectiveness of food aid, through the inclusion, where needed and feasible, of

micronutrients. Better ensure that the provision of food aid is consistent with long-term sustainable development objectives. Collaborate with other donors in focusing efforts to make transition from relief to development in areas such as the Greater Horn of Africa and the Southern Africa Development Conference.

- j) Better coordinate, both among themselves and with other donors and multilateral organizations, development and food aid assistance, and enhance its effectiveness, including through a greater focus on "results." Work, where appropriate, through the Development Assistance Committee Aid Guidelines.
- k) Continue efforts to encourage and facilitate implementation of food security-related actions adopted at recent international conferences or established in recently agreed conventions.
- l) Continue support for international efforts to respond to and prevent humanitarian crises for refugee assistance, disaster assistance, and food aid for emergency needs, and for international and other humanitarian organizations that respond to such crises and urge other donors to do the same. Also continue to work with other countries to build local capacity to prepare for natural disasters in order to mitigate their impact.
- m) Support maintenance of sustainable fisheries through implementation of recent agreements including the UN Agreement on the Conservation and Management of Straddling Fish Stocks and Highly Migratory Fish Stocks and the FAO Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries, and identify key constraints to effective conservation and aquaculture development.

6. Monitoring and Follow-up

Basis for Action

102. In addition to the indispensable, essential mobilization of national efforts, the effective implementation of the World Food Summit Plan of Action is dependent on supportive international cooperation and on a monitoring process at the national, regional, and global levels, using existing mechanisms and fora for its operation.

Objectives

103. a) Cooperation by all countries to achieve their individual goals and collaboration among all countries and international actors to organize collective solutions to global issues.

- b) North American collaboration with other donor countries to achieve a greater level of coordination of efforts and to pursue initiatives to improve the effectiveness of assistance and development efforts.

Actions to be Taken

- 104. National Level: Individual countries have the primary responsibility for ensuring the food security of their citizens. Governments, the private sector, NGOs, and other elements of civil society all have critical roles to play.
 - a) Individual governments should determine by the end of 1997 how the World Food Summit Plan of Action can be best applied to their countries to promote sustainable food security. By the end of 1997, each country should establish a timetable and procedures for the regular assessment and reporting of progress toward food security. Wherever possible, assessments and reporting should be gender disaggregated and indicate progress made in the involvement of the private sector, NGOs, and other elements of civil society.
 - b) Individual governments should continue to develop and apply criteria and indicators for the sustainable management of agriculture, fisheries, and forests and to demonstrate and evolve the concept of sustainable management through their application, taking into account specific regional and subregional conditions.
- 105. International Donor Level: Donors should encourage and reinforce the best efforts of countries committed to alleviate food insecurity.
 - a) North America will continue to review its development assistance policies to ensure that those resources are effectively used in support of national and international efforts to promote food security.
 - b) North America will continue to work with other donors and with recipient countries to improve the coordination of development assistance, including food aid.
 - c) North America will work with others towards the achievement of the OECD Ministerial target of reducing by 50 percent by 2015 the number of people living in absolute poverty.

106. International Organization Level

- a) FAO should develop follow-up policies through the Committee on World Food Security to permit intergovernmental review in 5 years of progress toward world food security, including specific measurement of steps taken pursuant to adoption of the Plan of Action. The FAO Council should review key developments and report them to the FAO Conference. At its 2002 session, the UN Economic and Social Commission should review progress toward national and global food security pursuant to the adoption of the Plan of Action.
- b) FAO should continue to improve and strengthen its early-warning and food security assessment programs.
- c) FAO should continue its work on implementing the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries.
- d) Organizations of the UN system, multilateral development banks, and other international development organizations should strengthen their ability to provide, in a coordinated fashion, policy advice to interested governments to enhance national efforts to reduce poverty and to increase food security.
- e) The Committee on Agriculture and the Ministerial Conference of the WTO should monitor the effects of the Uruguay Round on the supplies of basic foodstuffs from external sources for the least-developed and net food-importing, developing countries and consider appropriate action consistent with the WTO Ministerial Decision on Measures Concerning the Possible Negative Effects of the Reform Program on Least-Developed and Net Food-Importing Countries in the event of adverse impact on those countries. The appropriate action should include, where necessary, dialogue with other international institutions primarily responsible for formulating appropriate policies relating to food aid, technical assistance, and financing problems.
- f) The multilateral development banks should revitalize their support of developing country efforts to increase food security, especially in sub-Saharan Africa. These organizations should play a catalytic role in encouraging developing countries keen on implementing more effectively their own poverty reduction strategies and national food security policies. The International Monetary Fund should review the adequacy of its mechanisms for assisting in the resolution of balance of payments problems when they are the result of short-term increases in food import costs.

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